

**IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE**

Patent Application No. 10/536,494

Confirmation No. 6551

Applicant: Hoffman et al.

Filed: October 5, 2006

TC/AU: 1796

Examiner: Gregory Listvoyb

Docket No.: 235811 (Client Reference No. 059P 0579)

Customer No.: 23460

Commissioner for Patents  
P.O. Box 1450  
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

**INFORMATION DISCLOSURE STATEMENT**

Pursuant to 37 CFR 1.97 and 1.98, the references listed on the enclosed Form PTO-1449 and/or Substitute Form PTO-1449 ("Form 1449") are submitted for consideration by the Examiner in the examination of the above-identified patent application.

The full consideration of the references in their entirety by the Examiner is respectfully requested and encouraged. Also, it is respectfully requested that the references be entered into the record of the present application and that the Examiner initial the appropriate area on the enclosed Form 1449, thereby indicating the Examiner's consideration of each of the references.

The submission of the references listed on the Form 1449 is for the purpose of providing a complete record and is not a concession that the references listed thereon are prior art to the invention claimed in the patent application. The right is expressly reserved to establish an invention date earlier than the above-identified filing date in order to remove any reference submitted herewith as prior art should it be deemed appropriate to do so.

Further, the submission of the references is not to be taken as a concession that any reference represents art that is relevant or analogous to the claimed invention. Accordingly, the right to argue that any reference is not properly within the scope of prior art relevant to an examination of the claims in the above-identified application is also expressly reserved.

The Information Disclosure Statement is being filed:

**within** any one of the following time periods: (a) within three months of the filing date of a national application other than a continued prosecution application under 37 CFR 1.53(d); (b) within three months of the date of entry of the national stage as

set forth in 37 CFR 1.491 of an international application; (c) before the mailing date of a first Office Action on the merits; or (d) before the mailing of a first Office Action after the filing of a request for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114.

- Note: This submission includes the Statement under 37 CFR 1.704(d) (see "Statement under 37 CFR 1.704(d)" below), such that no reduction in patent term adjustment is warranted by the filing of this Information Disclosure Statement.
- after** (a), (b), (c) or (d) above, but before the mailing date of a final action under 37 CFR 1.113, a Notice of Allowance under 37 CFR 1.311, or an action that otherwise closes prosecution in the application, and includes *one* of:
  - the Statement under 37 CFR 1.97(e) (see "Statement under 37 CFR 1.97(e)" below).
- *or* —
- the fee of \$180 set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(p) (see "Fees" below).
- on or after** the mailing date of a final action under 37 CFR 1.113 or a Notice of Allowance under 37 CFR 1.311, or an action that otherwise closes prosecution in the application, and on or before payment of the issue fee, and includes the Statement under 37 CFR 1.97(e) (see "Statement under 37 CFR 1.97(e)" below), and the fee of \$180 as set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(p) (see "Fees" below).
- on or after** the mailing date of a Notice of Allowance under 37 CFR 1.311, and on or before payment of the issue fee, and **within** thirty days of receiving each item of information contained in the Information Disclosure Statement, and includes the Statement under 37 CFR 1.704(d) (see "Statement under 37 CFR 1.704(d)" below), and the fee of \$180 as set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(p) (see "Fees" below). NOTE: This is for original applications except applications for a design patent, filed on or after May 29, 2000, wherein a paper containing only an Information Disclosure Statement in compliance with 37 CFR 1.97 and 1.98 is being filed.

#### Citation to Other Patent Applications

- The following U.S. patent applications are hereby brought to the attention of the Examiner. The U.S. patent applications claim subject matter that may be considered by the Examiner to be similar to the subject matter claimed in the above-identified patent application. Accordingly, these U.S. patent applications and/or the prosecution pertaining thereto may include information considered to be material to the prosecution of the above-identified patent application. Since the Examiner has electronic access to the prosecution histories of these U.S. patent applications, copies of prosecution materials therefrom are not provided herewith, but will be promptly provided if the Examiner so desires and requests same.

U.S. APPLICATIONS		STATUS ( <i>check one</i> )			
U.S. APPLICATIONS	U.S. FILING DATE	Patented	Pending	Abandoned	Expired
1.					
2.					
3.					

**Copies of the References**

Copies of all of the references listed on the enclosed Form 1449 are enclosed herewith.

Copies of U.S. patents and patent applications that are listed on the accompanying Form 1449 are not enclosed herewith. Copies of other references identified on the accompanying Form 1449 are enclosed herewith.

For each reference not in the English language, attached is at least one of the following: (a) an English translation in whole or in part or (b) a concise statement of relevance in the form of, for example, an English language counterpart, an English-language abstract, or an English-language version of the search report or action by a foreign patent office in a counterpart foreign application indicating the degree of relevance found by the foreign office.

Copies of foreign search reports or foreign examination reports are enclosed as follows.

SEARCHING OR EXAMINING OFFICE	APPLICATION COUNTRY	APPLICATION NO.	DATE OF MAILING OF SEARCH REPORT OR EXAMINATION REPORT
JP	JP	2004-560448	November 11, 2009

The references listed on the enclosed Form 1449 were previously identified in the parent application(s) of the present application, and copies of the references were furnished at that time. Accordingly, additional copies of the references are not submitted herewith, so as not to burden the file with duplicate copies of references. The Examiner is respectfully requested to carefully review the references in accordance with the requirements set out in the Manual of Patent Examining Procedure. In accordance with 37 CFR 1.98(d), the details of the parent application(s) relied upon for an earlier filing date under 35 USC 120 in which copies of the references were previously furnished are set out below:

U.S. APPLICATIONS		STATUS ( <i>check one</i> )			
U.S. APPLICATIONS	U.S. FILING DATE	Patented	Pending	Abandoned	Expired
1.					
2.					
3.					

**Statement under 37 CFR 1.97(e)**

The **undersigned** hereby states that each item of information contained in the Information Disclosure Statement was first cited in any communication from a foreign patent office in a counterpart foreign patent application not more than three months prior to the filing of the Information Disclosure Statement.

The **undersigned** hereby states that no item of information contained in the Information Disclosure Statement was cited in a communication from a foreign patent office in a counterpart foreign patent application, and, to the knowledge of the undersigned after making reasonable inquiry, no item of information contained in the Information Disclosure Statement was known to any individual designated in 37 CFR 1.56(c) more than three months prior to the filing of the Information Disclosure Statement.

**Statement under 37 CFR 1.704(d)**

The **undersigned** hereby states that each item of information contained in the Information Disclosure Statement was cited in a communication from a foreign patent office in a counterpart application and that this communication was not received by any individual designated in 37 CFR 1.56(c) more than thirty days prior to the filing of the Information Disclosure Statement.

**Fees**

**No fee** is owed by the applicant(s).

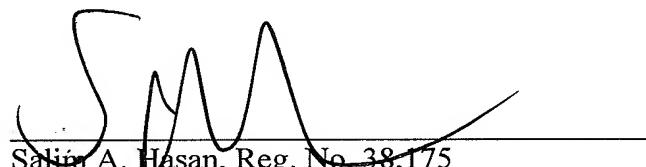
Charge Deposit Account No. 12-1216 in the amount of **\$180.00** (37 CFR 1.17(p)).

**Authorization to Charge Additional Fees**

If any additional fees are owed in connection with this communication, please charge Deposit Account No. 12-1216.

**Instructions as to Overpayment**

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Date: January 22, 2010